

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for enabling a user to refine a search query using a graphical user interface, the method comprising the steps of:
 - presenting a graphical user interface to a user;
 - enabling a user to selectively input search parameters into a first search query using the graphical user interface, wherein the step of presenting further comprises the steps of:
 - receiving the search query;
 - searching at least one database for objects that satisfy the search query;
 - determining whether at least one object stored in the database satisfies the search query;
 - retrieving a search result comprising the at least one object if a determination is made that the at least one object satisfies the search query;
 - determining a type of information included in the at least one object;
 - determining at least one search refinement option based on the type of information determined.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
 - presenting the at least one search refinement option to the user.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one search refinement option is presented in a drop-down menu.
4. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:
 - enabling the user to select the at least one search refinement option.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

enabling the user to input a second search query comprising the at least one search refinement option.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the second search query searches the search result for objects that satisfy the second search query.

7. A system for enabling a user to refine a search query using a graphical user interface, the system comprising:

presenting means for presenting a graphical user interface to a user;

search parameter inputting means for enabling a user to selectively input search parameters into a first search query using the graphical user interface;

receiving means for receiving the search query;

searching means for searching at least one database for objects that satisfy the search query;

search query determining means for determining whether at least one object stored in the database satisfies the search query;

retrieving means for retrieving a search result comprising the at least one object if a determination is made that the at least one object satisfies the search query;

information type determining means for determining a type of information included in the at least one object;

search refinement option determining means for determining at least one search refinement option based on the type of information determined.

8. The system of claim 7, further comprising search refinement option presenting means for presenting the at least one search refinement option to the user.

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9. The system of claim 8, wherein the at least one search refinement option is presented in a drop-down menu.

10. The system of claim 8, further comprising search refinement option selecting means for enabling the user to select the at least one search refinement option.

11. The system of claim 10, further comprising second search query inputting means for enabling the user to input a second search query comprising the at least one search refinement option.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the second search query searches the search result for objects that satisfy the second search query.

13. A system for enabling a user to refine a search query using a graphical user interface, the system comprising:

- a presenting module that presents a graphical user interface to a user;
- a search parameter inputting module that enables a user to selectively input search parameters into a first search query using the graphical user interface;
- a receiving module that receives the search query;
- a searching module that searches at least one database for objects that satisfy the search query;

a search query determining module that determines whether at least one object stored in the database satisfies the search query;

a retrieving module that retrieves a search result comprising the at least one object if a determination is made that the at least one object satisfies the search query;

an information type determining module that determines a type of information included in the at least one object;

a search refinement option determining module that determines at least one search refinement option based on the type of information determined.

14. The system of claim 13, further comprising a search refinement option presenting module that presents the at least one search refinement option to the user.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the at least one search refinement option is presented in a drop-down menu.

16. The system of claim 14, further comprising a search refinement option selecting module that enables the user to select the at least one search refinement option.

17. The system of claim 16, further comprising a second search query inputting module that enables the user to input a second search query comprising the at least one search refinement option.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the second search query searches the search result for objects that satisfy the second search query.

19. A processor readable medium comprising processor readable code embodied therein for causing a processor to enable a user to refine a search query using a graphical user interface, the medium comprising:

presenting code that causes a processor to present a graphical user interface to a user;

search parameter inputting code that causes a processor to enable a user to selectively input search parameters into a first search query using the graphical user interface;

receiving code that causes a processor to receive the search query;

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searching code that causes a processor to search at least one database for objects that satisfy the search query;

search query determining code that causes a processor to determine whether at least one object stored in the database satisfies the search query;

retrieving code that causes a processor to retrieve a search result comprising the at least one object if a determination is made that the at least one object satisfies the search query;

information type determining code that causes a processor to determine a type of information included in the at least one object;

search refinement option determining code that causes a processor to determine at least one search refinement option based on the type of information determined.

20. The medium of claim 19, further comprising a search refinement option presenting code that causes a processor to present the at least one search refinement option to the user.

21. The medium of claim 20, wherein the at least one search refinement option is presented in a drop-down menu.

22. The medium of claim 20, further comprising search refinement option selecting code that causes a processor to enable the user to select the at least one search refinement option.

23. The medium of claim 22, further comprising second search query inputting code that causes a processor to enable the user to input a second search query comprising the at least one search refinement option.

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24. The medium of claim 23, wherein the second search query searches the search result for objects that satisfy the second search query.

RES 59354v2

J. COMPUT. PHYS. 1998, VOL. 145, NO. 1, PP. 1–22